

4-4-1935

Letter from Virginia Veeder Westervelt, Wellesley,
Massachusetts, to Mrs. Millicent Veeder,
Schenectady, New York, 1935 April 4

Virginia Veeder Westervelt

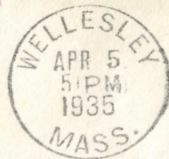
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Mrs. Millicent Veeder
108 Elmer Avenue
Schenectady,
New York

4/5/35

Thursday
[4 April, 1935]

Mother very dearest,

Well! So Grandpa wants night life, bright lights and company, does he? And how old will his next birthday cake show? How pitifully selfish and unseeing some people can be. I've always thought he had got into the habit of grumbling in general and just did it for anything that came along, but I certainly didn't think he would dare presume to talk about "an understanding." I've never heard such a ridiculous thing; as if you were a fractious child, or he were an abused and neglected young bride! I know how serious and childish he can be, or it would almost be funny. He must have been reading too many novels where old people weren't understood and selfish children left the old folks all alone and it just wasn't right. He ought to be pampered and kept company and amused, because he has lived his life and existed many days without being appreciated. Poor man, it's rather sad to have lived so long and not have any friends to come and see him. After depending on his daughter for about 40 years, he still must cling to her, and try to pull her age up to his.

That evening must have been ghastly. To think of his daring to say that. No, of course you couldn't then stalk out of the house and go...it wouldn't be you, and Grandpa isn't someone you could laugh at and say, "Don't be silly!" I think you did the only possible thing at the moment, but I do hope you talked to him afterwards and didn't give in to him too much. Do I think you should plan to stay with him oftener than 2 nights a week? Well, I jolly well don't. And if you dare to set two regular nights when you won't go out, I'll do something! Why, those would be the very nights someone would plan something that you shouldn't give up, and goodness knows, you go out little enough as it is. I suppose you've had your talk with him by this time, but you've got to make him state his grievances and then show him how silly and childish and selfish they are. Ask him if he wants you to sit home every night with him when he never offers any inducement to you to do that. If he had anything to contribute, any sort of mind that would be interesting to talk to, like some old men who have really found something in life worth talking about, it would be different. But if he can offer no reason for your staying there with him beyond the fact that he is your father, I see small reason for your staying. I don't think he ever sees anyone else's point of view at all, and he certainly understands you very little, if he could ask you to stay home with him like that. It's the same principle as little boy not wanting mamma to go to the party, but to stay home and play at making mud pies with him.

Of course I think a child should never allow a helpless parent to be neglected...but the responsibility of providing a home and food, you've certainly fulfilled most of your life with scant reward. He doesn't even appreciate what you do do. If he did, you wouldn't mind doing more, but it's almost certain that he wouldn't even appreciate that, but would take it as a matter of course. I think it all comes down to that. If he really appreciated it when you

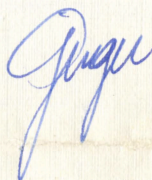
stayed, acted overjoyed and tried to be agreeable to partly pay you, it might be a little different. But as it is, I think if you gave up any little pleasures of your own, for someone for whom you've already done a great deal, and who hasn't and wouldn't appreciate and respond, it would be like starving in order to give your ham to a Jew!

Maybe I'm wrong, maybe Grandpa does appreciate things, but he certainly acts as if he took most of it for granted. I wish to heck I could be there at the "understanding." As a matter of fact, I'm going to be. I'll wait until I hear how it came out, he may have backed down and realized some things meanwhile, but I'm going to write him myself, and tell him just how it seems to me, perhaps in little more softened form, but believe me, the essence is going to be there. I think he has no right to demand anything further from you, but instead he ought to begin to appreciate what you've already done. I may tell him you don't know I'm writing, but that I can see both sides from here, and perhaps some things that he hasn't thought of. Don't you think I should? Somebody's got to, and he might take it from me. If he doesn't, he just won't, but I'm not going to have him acting that way. He has no right to dictate even the smallest part of your life, and somebody's got to tell him so. May I appoint myself for the job? I'd enjoy it. Don't worry, I shall be discreet, but definite.

Well, back to Wellesley. Went downtown yesterday with M.F. & H? Coz and Helen, and got Don a leather key tainer with a tiny flash light attached to one end. for \$1.00. I think he has a good chance of liking it. The woman who sold it had a beautiful line...often can't find right key..turn on light..so..fit key into lock easily..then in a theater..might want to leave early but can't see watch..just turn on light, focus it on watch without disturbing anyone else, and you can see what time it is...couldn't carry around a big flashlight, and might misplace it anyway if you were that kind of person, but this you would always have with you...replace the battery with a five-cent one if it wore out...but my yes, it would last a long time...very practical..sure he would like it... sold so many.....(ad infinitum) I was glad I had decided to take it right away, or I should have walked out with my hands over my ears! Wellesley being the sort of town it is, I could see myself traipsing around looking for a mannish something, so I grabbed the first thing I came to that could be masculine. Then we stopped at Seilers for a peppermint ice cream cone. Remember Brand Blvd.? I still can't think of the name of that place. Or even of the one down on Central St. I hope I don't forget California! I'd like a bit of it at this moment. Gray skies and a bit of a wind...so much prefer sunshine. Because of wind, the cold hasn't entirely gone away yet, but it seems to be on the wane. I take my halibut, and have been in bed before 11 every night, mamma. Oh, the wall thing for Lee came this morning, so don't bother to call, if you haven't already. It came thru beautifully. Don't let the affair with Grandpa turn anything sour..just regulate the books he reads, think of him as an old man and

not as a tyrannous father. Don't take him so seriously---
it's a preposterous, dramatic sort of thing that has no
foundation. When you pin him right down, I'm afraid he
won't have much grounds for his precious accusations.
Let me know just how it came out---I'm rooting for you, darling!

Love greatly to you,



P.S. Shall I get any announcements to send to people? Of
Commencement, I mean? They're 4¢ a piece. The
cardboard programs are 18¢ and the leather are 32¢
I thought I'd get you and Mum Mum each a leather
one, eh? I have to order them by the 10th. I sort
of hate to send out announcements---so very much like
"Please I want a present." Who do I really need
them for, though? Aunt Fanny, Mildred, the Wilsons?
Eliot house is going to be open for \$1.50 a night for
room and breakfast, and most of the other places are
\$2.00 and up to \$5.00. They raise the price during
Commencement. So if it's O.K. with you, I'll see if
I can get rooms there. They may not be too nice,
but in the long run it would be cheaper, I think.

Love you again,

